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November 18, 2014



OEA
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Somerset County , Maryland, Abandonment of Railroad

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to you regarding the Notice of Intent to Abandon Rail Service in Somerset County, MD as published in the Somerset County Times on November 12, 2014. See enclosed copy of notice. It is my understanding that Somerset County and the State of Maryland would like to acquire the railroad bed with the intention of developing a large bicycle trail.

Your notice states that interested persons may make inquiries to you regarding the Abandonment of Rail Service. I am an adjoining landowner to the existing railroad line. My concern is that Somerset County and the State of Maryland will not follow their own environmental rules when they obtain this railroad property. Maryland has a "Critical Area" law which regulates development in Marsh and waters that flow into the Chesapeake Bay. The railroad line crosses a Marsh area and a creek just north of Kingston, MD. Maryland's Critical Area law clearly states that No Development or Roads are to be constructed within the Critical Area. It seems to be the intention of the Somerset County Government and the State of Maryland to ignore the Critical Area law in this case and to develop the Marsh area occupied by the old railroad bed.

I hope you will take these environment matters into consideration when you decide to allow abandonment of the railroad line. No trains have used the line (the rails are gone) for over forty years and therefore the existing rail line is not a threat to the environment. However, I fear that if the railroad line is turned into a bike trail, substantial environmental damage will occur in this sensitive marsh area.

Please let me know if I can file further comments once your Environment Assessment is complete. I hope any Environmental Assessment that you prepare will consider the current State of Maryland Critical Area laws and that no construction (of bike trails or roads) will be allowed to take place on the railroad bed that crosses the Marsh and Creek north of Kingston, MD.

Thank You for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,


William Hall Coons

Notice of Intent to Abandon Rail Service

The Maryland Transit Administration, a non-carrier, gives notice that on or about November 26, 2014, it intends to file with the Surface Transportation Board, Washington, DC 20423, a notice of exemption under 49 C.F.R. 1152 Subpart F—Exempt Abandonments permitting the abandonment of a 14.57 mile line of railroad approximately between railroad milepost 1.2 near Kings Creek and milepost 16.3 near Crisfield, which traverses through United States Postal Service Zip Codes 21817, 21838, and 21871 in Somerset County, Maryland. The proceeding has been docketed as No. AB-590 (Sub-No. 1X).

The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) will generally prepare an Environmental Assessment (EA), which will normally be available 25 days after the filing of the notice of exemption. Comments on environmental and energy matters should be filed no later than 15 days after the EA becomes available to the public and will be addressed in a Board decision. Interested persons may obtain a copy of the EA or make inquiries regarding environmental matters by writing to OEA, Surface Transportation Board, 395 E Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20423 or by calling OEA at (202) 245-0295.

The Maryland Transit Administration is seeking abandonment of the line in order to make it available for railbanking and trail development. Appropriate offers of financial assistance to continue rail service can be filed with the Board. Requests for environmental conditions, public use conditions, or rail banking/trails use also can be filed with the Board. However, in light of the proposed development of the right-of-way for interim trail use, Maryland Transit Administration will be filing a petition to exempt this abandonment proceeding from the requirements to make the line available for offers of financial assistance or alternate public uses. An original and 10 copies of any pleading that raises matters other than environmental issues (such as trails use, public use, and offers of financial assistance) must be filed directly with the Board's Section of Administration, Office of Proceedings, 395 E Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001 [See 49 C.F.R. 1104.1(a) and 1104.3(a)], and one copy must be served on applicants' representative [See 49 C.F.R. 1104.12(a)]. Questions regarding offers of financial assistance, public use or trails use may be directed to the Board's Office of Public Assistance, Governmental Affairs, and Compliance at (202) 245-0238. Copies of any comments or requests for conditions should be served on the applicant's representative: Charles A. Spitulnik, Kaplan Kirsch & Rockwell, 1001 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036, (202) 955-5600.